

HEALTH

FIT AND FABULOUS

Arguably the single most important day for most women, a wedding is preceded by months of painstaking preparations. Apart from the bigger, more obvious chores, wellness and fitness prepares a bride on the inside out and provides that natural glow on her special day. Nawaz Modi Singhania, fitness expert and founder of Body Art offers the *L'Officiel* bride answers to some infrequently asked questions.

By Sukanya RANGARAJ. Photo Ashima MEHRA.

L'Officiel: How can one schedule a workout during the hectic days leading up to the wedding?

Nawaz Modi Singhania: Firstly a bride should anticipate that the last few days will be hectic where one would have other priorities and there might not be time for workouts. So I suggest do more in advance and space out your sessions accordingly based on your motivation level. In the final days make up for the lack in exercise through a healthy diet.

With just one month to go, what's your advice with regard to fitness and nutrition?

A proper combo of cardio exercise and resistance/strength training that's going to knock those kilos and inches off, while toning and firming you up. A sensible low-fat, low-sugar eating plan must be combined with your workouts to achieve the result you want. This should be balanced with guidance from a qualified nutritionist.

What wellness tips would you give a bride?

Get an adequate amount of sleep and drink lots of water. Also weddings are stressful times, which involve a lot of people with conflicting ideas. One needs to know how to manage these situations, have an adjusting attitude and letting go of things which are not important. Have a positive attitude and only hold on to the things that are important.

Any vitamins, supplements and nutraceuticals that you would advise?

These are harmful if not medically advised and taken without prescriptions. But Vitamin C is important not just for a bride but anyone. It is an antioxidant and strengthens the immune system. It should be taken everyday.

A bride is bound to consume alcohol. So could you give us some alcohol do's and don'ts.

The best alcohol pick would be red wine, being the least harmful. But one tends to snack on oily appetisers and *namkeens* along with alcohol which can cause weight gain and make one bloat up. Opt for healthier options like grilled mushrooms, carrot and cucumber sticks served with yogurt or other healthy dips.

What is your take on fat burners and their harmful effects?

For starters fat burners lead to a lot of health

issues such as high blood pressure, heart diseases, rapid pulse and other cardiac issues. The same goes for diet pills. Both give results which are very temporary and short lived. One should just work out regularly and increase their metabolic rate naturally. There is no easy way out for weight loss. The right diet coupled with exercise is the only way.

Could you suggest some exercises for the face?

There are various facial fitness exercises which can be learnt through anti-ageing classes. These focus on different problem areas such as droopy eyelids, puffiness, frown lines and the like. So counter these based on your problem areas.

Any comfort foods one can opt for that are non-fattening?

Go for diabetic chocolate, shallow fried, baked or grilled food items. There are also a host of low fat yogurt and gelato options to choose from which taste good as well. And incorporate fresh fruits in your diet.

How should one avoid overdoing the exercise plans?

Two hours of work out spread over six days a week is a limit. Don't overdo it beyond that. Also crash dieting is not advisable as the results are very temporary. It may help you meet your D day deadline but is not favourable health wise. In the long run it will lead to bloating up, dizziness and make you giddy and tired. A lot of times, a year down the line brides tend to put on much more because of crash diets. Never embark on an exercise programme without your physician's approval. Always warm-up before your workout and cool-down post it appropriately. The best thing to do is to get professional help; join a fitness centre which offers you cross training programmes—a wide variety of classes.

What last minute tips would you give a bride?

On the final day don't eat any food that is salty and retains water as it will make you look bloated. Go for fresh fruits and vegetables and raw food that will leave you looking radiant. Apart from that, turn to the hairstylist and make-up artist for the final touches. It is an interesting phase of life that you are entering with marriage, filled with its fair share of joys and challenges. Let the date of

you becoming a wife be the date that you promise to become fit to manage a family. It's your day, enjoy it and don't hold on to the little things that don't matter. My best wishes.

For brides at various levels of fitness, encapsulated below are few common health and exercise tips for the eight weeks leading up to the wedding date:

WEEK ONE

Join a hi-lo fusion aerobic class in your local fitness centre. They combin a good amount of floor work anyway, so you shouldn't have to bother with doing anything more. Allow your body to get used to the initial strains and stresses of physical activity at this time.

WEEK TWO

To ensure that monotony doesn't set in and the body continues to drop weight, inches and fat off fast, switch to another cardio workout for this week. Indoor biking is very effective.

WEEK THREE

Continue with week two's agenda. Add on a 45-minute session of resistance to start with. Begin working with resistance tubes and bands.

WEEK FOUR

Continue with the resistance training of the previous week, but replace the indoor biking with roller-blading instead.

WEEK FIVE

Even if you're new to exercise, by now it's important to step up your cardio to five to six times a week, and strength training to four to five times a week. Make sure you keep at least one day a week where you get total rest though. Calisthenics and callanetics should help. Again, your local fitness centre will provide these classes. You should have lost an inch and a half to three inches per area by now and you should be feeling more determined than ever to stick to the path.



WEEK SIX

You've been at your cardio activity for two weeks now, and it's time again to rotate. Drop the roller blading and switch over to step classes. Stick with the calisthenics and callanetics of last week though.

WEEK SEVEN

Keep busy 'stepping on it', but drop your calisthenics and callanetics and move onto pilates now, mat or equipment-based is fine.

WEEK EIGHT

If you enjoy swimming, and if not, then stair climbing is a good option for the final lap. Regarding the firming up, partner workouts are a perfect option for this week. You ought to

have lost three to six inches in total per area by now and should be fitting into a whole new wardrobe, with lots of people commenting on how great you look! Even for those brides who are looking for quick results before the wedding date, I would suggest that you continue with your fitness schedules after the wedding to ensure that you are physically and mentally equipped to handle the new role of wife and maybe in due course, a mother. Again, the wedding phase with its eating-out and rich food, offers more than enough reason to lose all the fitness you have gained in the past months, so it helps to be cognisant of your physical health amidst all the food and fun.